

I want to bear down on that point. But perhaps my experience as a government officer will be of some use to you, because a great deal has been said about the right of public employees to organize.

When federal statutes and executive orders authorized employees to organize, I was very apprehensive about it as being in charge of 5,000 custodial officers engaged in law enforcement.

There could be no group more vital to the safety of our country, and I was most apprehensive about it, but as time went on, I came to accept it and believed that it was a great morale builder for the employees, much help to the administrator, and of real significance in promoting better relations between management and the employees.

We talked about such things as work schedules; we talked about promotion policies; we talked about and set up methods of selection procedures, grievance procedures, organizations or organized social functions, all of which contributed to the well being of our people.

Since this organization has been in effect, the turn-over in our service has decreased and the turn-over among a group of this kind, where manpower is so short, has heretofore been great.

THE CHAIRMAN: You have one-quarter minute, Delegate Bennett.

DELEGATE BENNETT: Our employees of course, could not strike but this opportunity to organize goes beyond that. Its great importance and significance is as a morale builder and an opportunity for people to speak with their bosses. I hope this amendment passes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does any delegate desire to speak in opposition? Delegate Marvin Smith.

DELEGATE M. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, my inherited prejudices, if one could have such, would be on the side of labor. My father spent his entire life working as a printer for others. His father before him worked with his hands for his entire adult life.

Now, Mr. Chairman, really what is being attempted to accomplish here is to organize public employees. This is a matter that should be studied by the General Assembly, not done here.

Reference has been made to the number of agricultural workers. The average farmer employs an insufficient number of people to be worth an attempt to organize.

Yes, reference has been made to migratory workers and there are times when a farmer will employ a number of migratory workers, but for very short periods of time and the Department of Agriculture represents those people and tells a farmer what he must pay. What we are really talking about here is an attempt on the part of organized labor to reach out and to pick up the public employees, and I say to you sir, that this is a matter for General Assembly action.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does any other delegate desire to speak in favor of the amendment?

Delegate Mitchell.

DELEGATE MITCHELL: Mr. President and fellow delegates, the preamble to the federal Constitution says what is the purpose of all constitutions, that we the people, in order to form a more perfect union and to establish justice and insure domestic tranquility, and so forth.

I would say that it is unrealistic not to recognize that the substitution in American life of the bargaining table instead of the streets and the riots that preceded the recognition of the exploitation of human labor in this country, has been an important gain in the growth of our nation, and I want to speak from the standpoint of peace, the assurance of domestic peace.

It seems to me that this technique which we have evolved out of the painful years, when there was no recognition of the right of working people to organize, to insure that their labor, which was all that they had to offer in the marketplace, would not be exploited, so that they could protect their homes and their children and themselves from the bitter fruits of that exploitation, has given to the working people hope and faith in the founding principles of this country. When you take the average employee in a position of asking for his rights, and the position of the employer, you have a basic inequality, because the employer is at the highest point in that relationship of power.

THE CHAIRMAN: You have one-half minute, Delegate Mitchell.

DELEGATE MITCHELL: Therefore, the hope that it has given the individual worker against the exploitation of his labor has been his right to join with his fellow workers and sit down as equals at the bargaining table with the employer.

I would say that the history of organized labor in this country which has been rec-